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$1.25 US
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THE BLADES OF BLUE MAX
DIRECT EDITION

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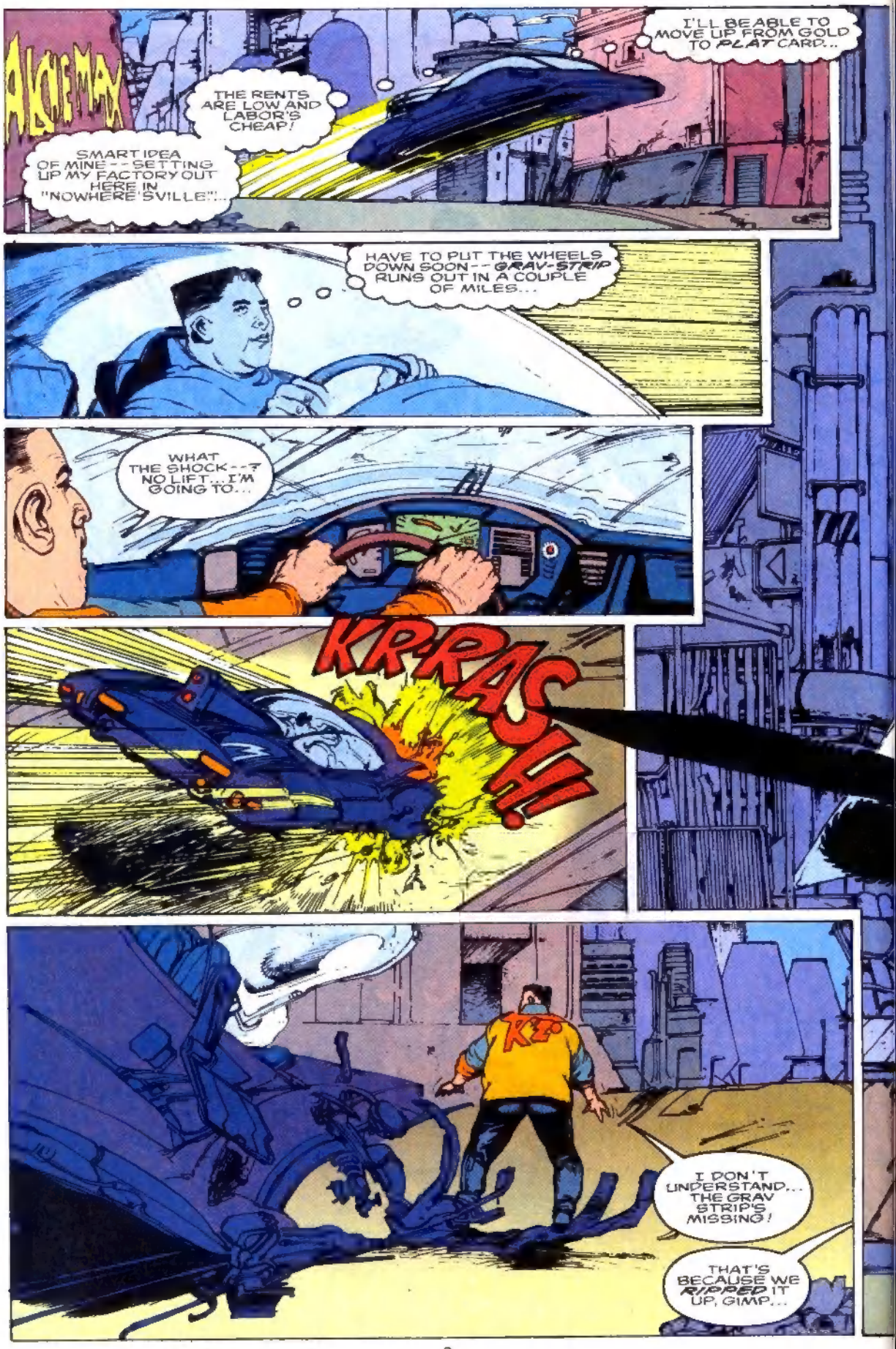
ALCHEMAX
I'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE UP FROM GOLD TO PLAT CARD...
THE RENTS ARE LOW AND LABOR'S CHEAP!
SMART IDEA OF MINE--SETTING UP MY FACTORY OUT HERE IN "NOWHERE'SVILLE"!...
HAVE TO PUT THE WHEELS DOWN SOON--GRAV-STRIP RUNS OUT IN A COUPLE OF MILES...
WHAT THE SHOCK--? NO LIFT...I'M GOING TO...
KR-RASH!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND... THE GRAV STRIP'S MISSING!
THAT'S BECAUSE WE RIPPED IT UP, GIMP...

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WELCOME TO *REALITY*, GOLD CARD!

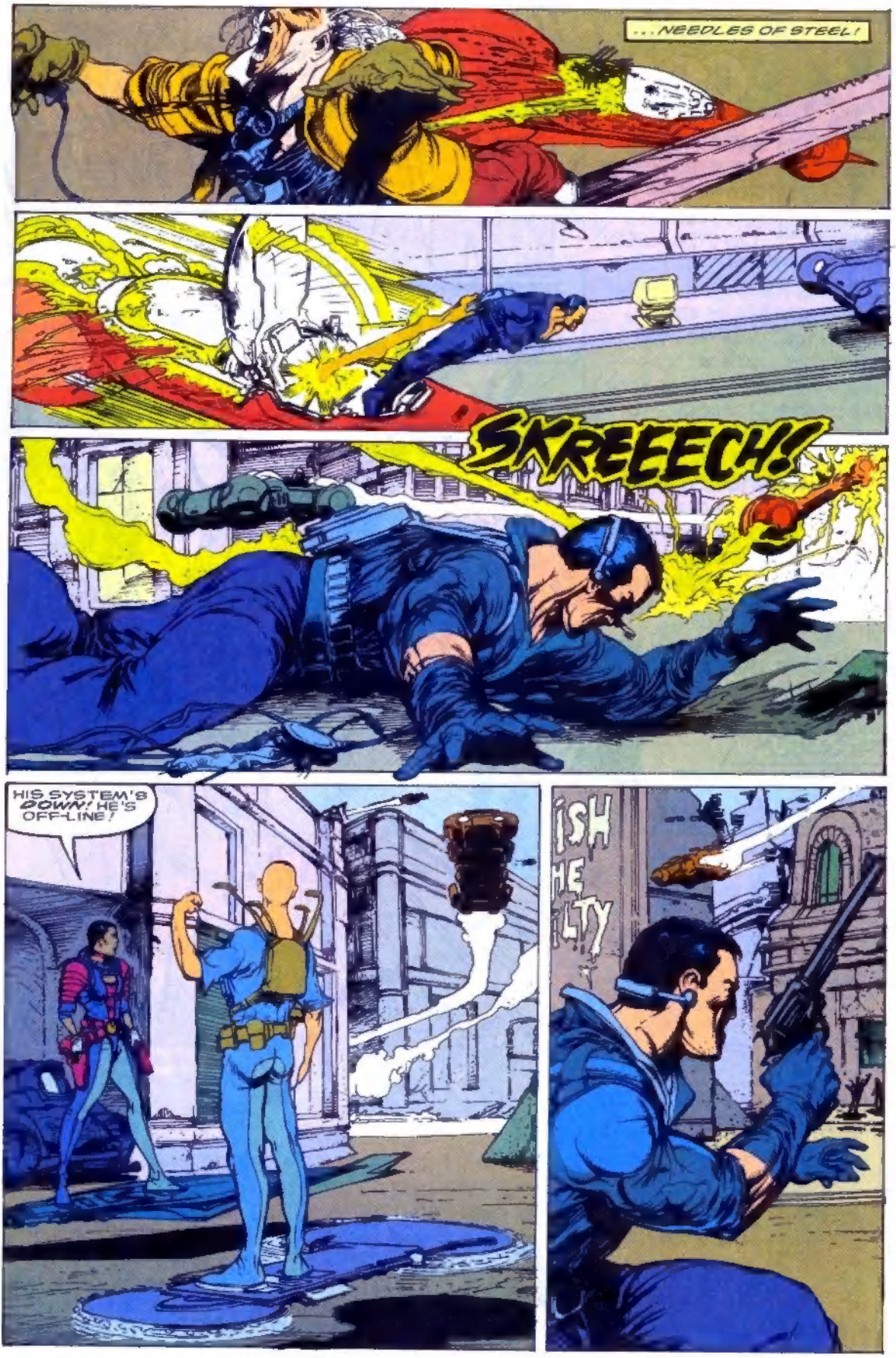
WELCOME TO REALITY, GOLD CARD!

HOW--HOW DO YOU KNOW I'VE A GOLD CARD?
MY SCANNER TOLD ME...
YOUR SCANNER...? OH, SWEET SHOCK! YOUR NECKLACE, IT'S MADE OF...
YES... CREDIT I.D. IMPLANTS... THOSE CLEVER LITTLE CIRCUITS THAT MAKE THE CARDS WORK.
I COLLECT THEM. I'M COLLECTING YOURS RIGHT NOW.
H'MM... LOCATED UNDER YOUR RIBCAGE... RIGHT NEXT TO YOUR PULSE-MAKER...
SOLID STATE
WEAK HEART, HUH? 'FRAID YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIVE THROUGH THIS ONE, MR. GOLD CARD.
BUT LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE... THINK OF ALL THE THINGS IT'LL BUY ME--WITH THE RIGHT DESIGNER LABELS.
HURRY, MAX-- THE DUDE'S AUTO ALARM WILL BEACON A'DOG...
NO "WATCHDOG" IS GONNA TANGLE WITH US TO SAVE HIS FLESH!
YOU'D TAKE MY LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF FASHION...?
WHAT ELSE, SUCKER...? THERE ARE ONLY LABELS... THERE'S NO SENSE TO LIFE... NO REASON...

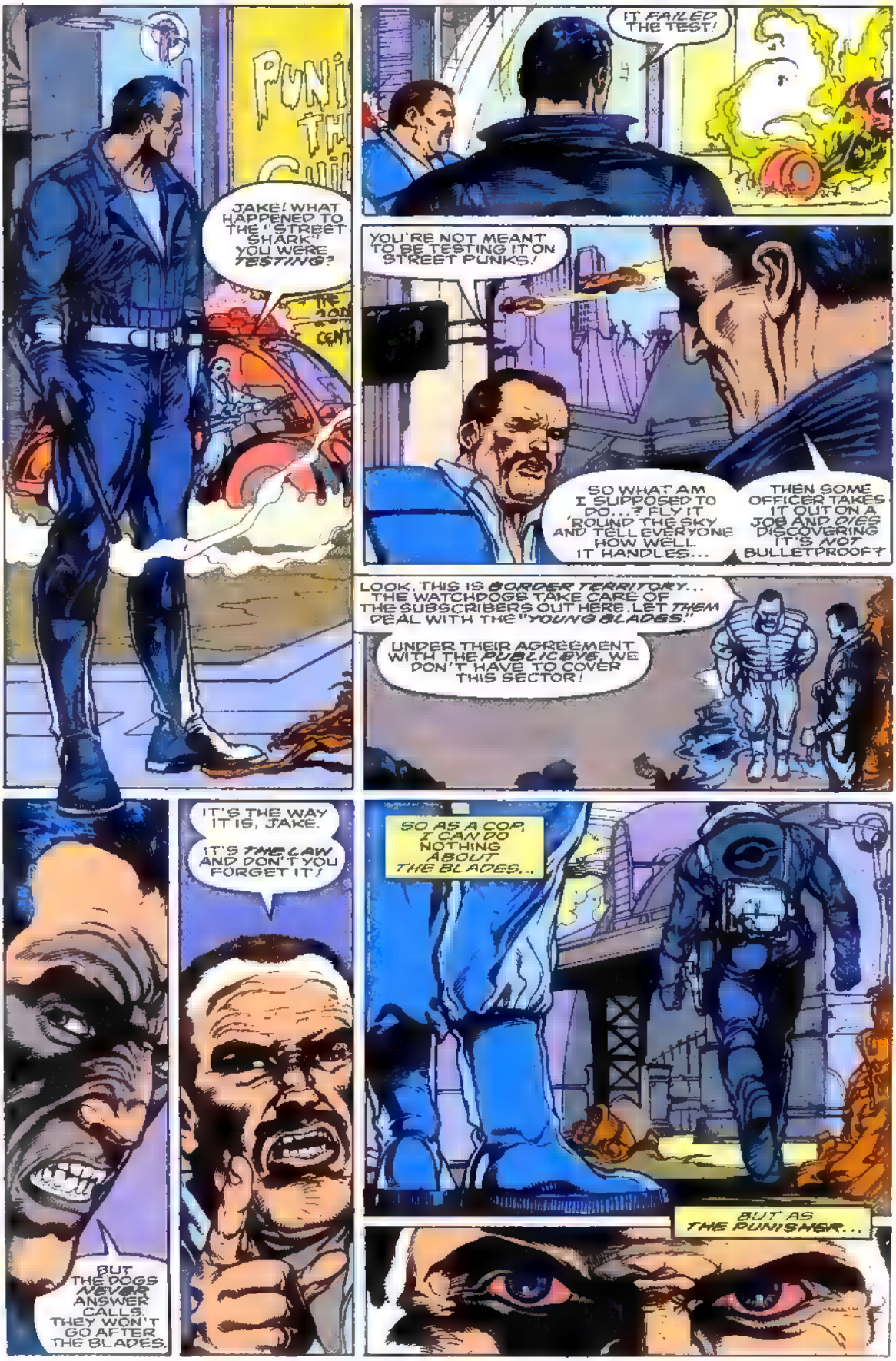
"...NO JUSTICE."
THAT'S ON THE DOWNTOWN BORDER. THE "WATCHDOGS" ARE MEANT TO COVER THAT TERRITORY... EXCEPT THEY NEVER DO...
COURSE APPROVED. GET ME THERE FAST!
COMFLYING.
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE FIELD-TESTING THIS NEW GYRO INTERCEPTOR UNIT.
THE INDUCTION COILS ARE THROWING THE MERCURY AROUND THE GYRO-TUBES AT FORTY METERS A SECOND, GIVING IT ENORMOUS CENTRIFUGAL FORCE...
BUT AS SMOOTH AS GREASED LIGHTNING.
SPEAKING OF WHICH... I'LL TRY OUT THE NEW LIGHTNING LASER SHREDDER...

PUBLIC EYE! STOP! LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS!
GET OFF-LINE, DEADWARE!
COMMENCE FIRING SEQUENCE...
...WIDE FOCUS PAGE PATTERN!
AGHHH!
EEEYAH!
DRAW BLADES! FAN OUT OF HERE!
YOU GOT IT, MAX.

> IDENTITY OF GANG ESTABLISHED: YOUNG BLADES.
> LEADER: MAXINE SANDS A.K.A. BLUE MAX, 17 YEARS OLD.
> PRODUCT OF UNAUTHORIZED UNION OF DECREED PERSONS.
> RECORD FOLLOWS.
> WANTED FOR MURDER OF THREE PUBLIC EYE SUBSCRIBERS. SUSPECTED OF FIFTEEN OTHERS.
> UNAUTHORIZED REMOVAL AND USE OF I.D. CHIPS OF ABOVE.
> ILLEGAL USE OF MICRO-JETS IN CITY AIR SPACE. VIOLATION OF TRAFFIC CODES 17900 AND 48552. AGGRAVATED ASSAULT OF EDUCATION OFFICER.
> HOLDER OF BLUE DAGGER FOR FIVE YEARS: ILLEGAL COMPETITION BETWEEN CRIMINAL GANGS FOR POSSESSION OF BLUE-DAGGER JET BLADE.<
HARD WOMAN, HUH? HER KIND NEED WIPING FROM THE SKY...
SHOCK IT! THE UNIT'S ARMOR'S TOO LIGHT...IT'S NOT COPING WITH HER FIRE...!
THE MOTOR'S SPITTING HOT MERCURY AND AT THAT VELOCITY, IT'S LIKE...


...NEEDLES OF STEEL!
SKREEECH!
HIS SYSTEM'S DOWN! HE'S OFF-LINE!
ISH
HE
LTY

WHAT A DOPE! HE'S TRYING TO HIT US WITH A HANDGUN! AND WE'RE A THOUSAND METERS OFF!
THAT'S IT, JERK. STAND THERE FOR ME!
...CROSSWIND ABOUT THIRTY CLICKS. MAGNUM ROUNDS--TRAJECTORY NEGLIGIBLE...
HE'D HAVE TO BE SUPERHUMAN TO MAKE THE SHOT!
HEY BONEHEAD! KISS MY--
AGHHH!
EEYAH!
WOW! HE GOT YOU, JAYMY! HE'S NO ORDINARY COP!
BETTER INCREASE DISTANCE! LIKE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET!

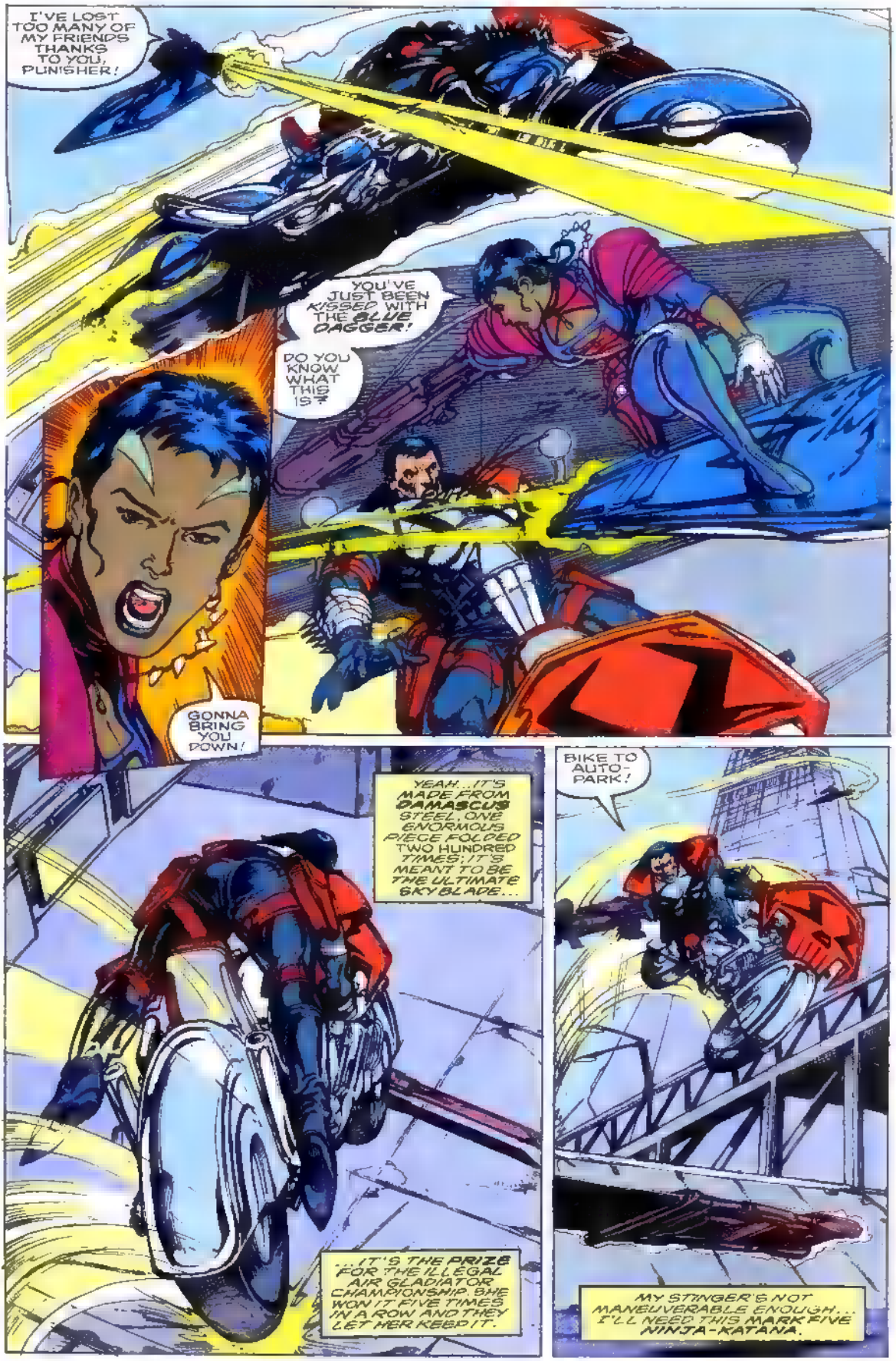

JAKE! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE "STREET SHARK"? YOU WERE *TESTING*?
IT *FAILED* THE TEST!
YOU'RE NOT MEANT TO BE TESTING IT ON STREET PUNKS!
SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...? FLY IT 'ROUND THE SKY AND TELL EVERYONE HOW WELL IT HANDLES...
THEN SOME OFFICER TAKES IT OUT ON A JOB AND DIES DISCOVERING IT'S *NOT* BULLETPROOF!
LOOK, THIS IS *BORDER TERRITORY*... THE WATCHDOGS TAKE CARE OF THE SUBSCRIBERS OUT HERE. LET *THEM* DEAL WITH THE "*YOUNG BLADES*."
UNDER THEIR AGREEMENT WITH THE *PUBLIC EYE*, WE DON'T HAVE TO COVER THIS SECTOR!
IT'S THE WAY IT IS, JAKE.
IT'S *THE LAW* AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!
BUT THE DOGS *NEVER* ANSWER CALLS. THEY WON'T GO AFTER THE BLADES.
SO AS A COP, I CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT THE BLADES...
BUT AS THE PUNISHER...

WOHHH! A PLAT MAN! NEVER LAID MY HANDS ON A PLATINUM CARD. BEFORE...
WHAT COLOR'S YOUR I.D. IMPLANT...? GUESS I'LL FIND OUT SOON.
PLEASE... I'LL TRANSFER ANY AMOUNT... YOU LIKE... GIVE YOU ANYTHING.
YEAH-- YOU CAN DO THAT, CAN'T YOU?
OF COURSE. MONEY MEANS NOTHING TO ME!
HA! HA! WRONG ANSWER, MAN. SHE'LL CARVE YOU SLOW NOW!
TELL ME, PLAT MAN... DO YOU EVER HAVE DAYS [redacted] YOU WISHED YOU'D NEVER BEEN [redacted]?
UHNN! YEAH- LIKE TODAY!
NOT FUNNY!
I FEEL LIKE THAT EVERY DAY!
WITH YOUR PLAT CARD YOU CAN BUY PEOPLE... APARTMENTS... OFF-PLANET VACATIONS... DESIGNER GRAV-BOOTS...
GRAV-BOOTS...?
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?
SHUT UP! YOU AND THE BLACK CARDERS HAVE JUST GOT TO THINK OF A THING AND IT'S YOURS!

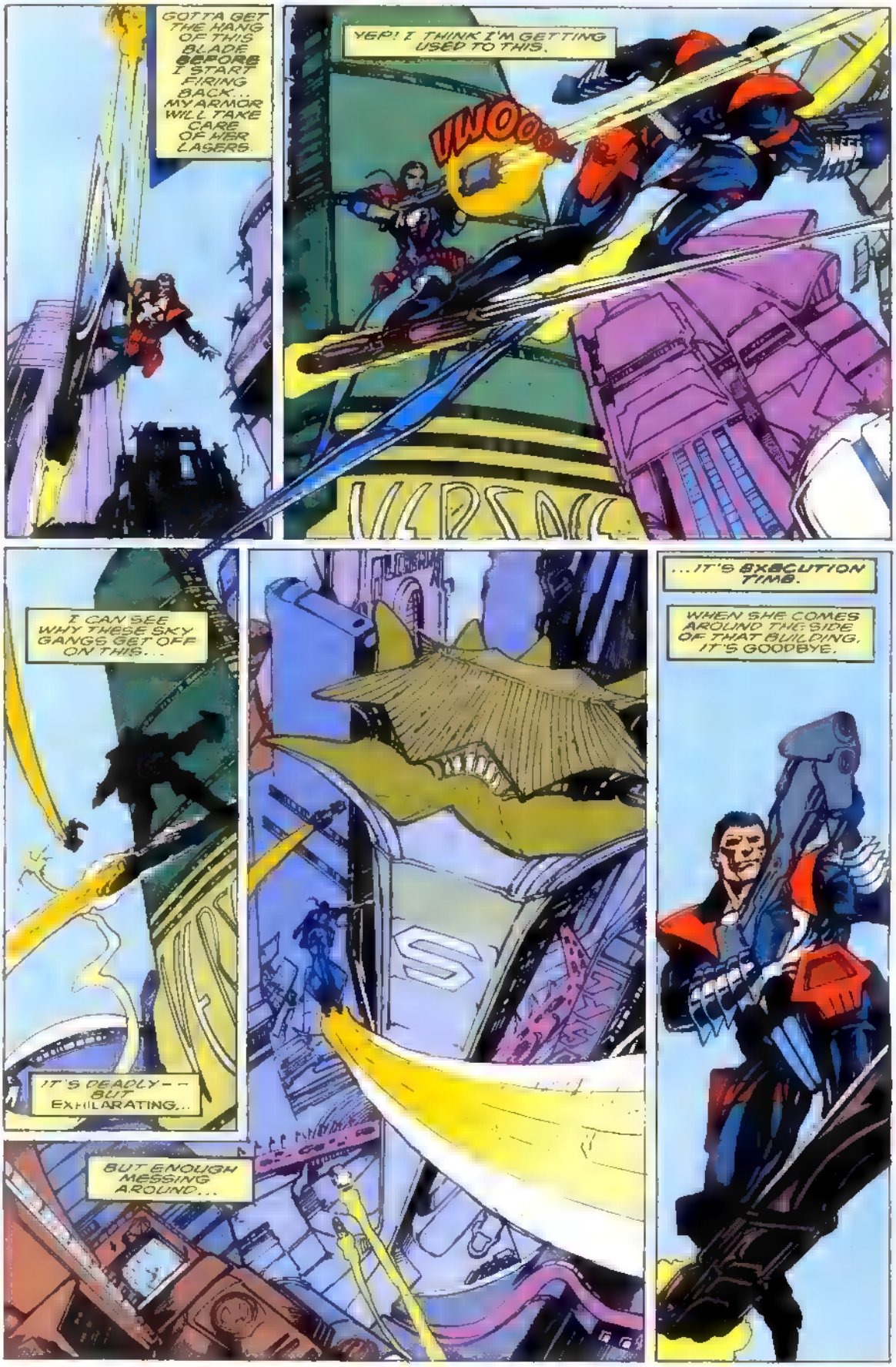
BUT I'M A DECREED! I WAS BORN A NOBODY! A NON-PERSON! REFUSED ACCESS TO SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, HYPERMARKETS SHOPPING MALLS.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO ENTER SANTA'S GROTTO AT EIGHT YEARS OLD -- AND HE CALLS SECURITY?
NO, YOU DON'T. BUT YOU KNOW YOU'RE GONNA DIE!
KA''FE DISPOSED OF WITH NEEDLE LASER. NOW, TO FINISH OFF "MIGS CHIP ON HER SHOULDER" AND HER GANG.
THAT'S THE ONE THING THAT MAKES US EQUAL!
UUUHHH?!
SHOCK! IT'S THE PUNISHER!

DRAW BLADES!
LET'S HIT THE SKY!
THESE LAWLESS STREET GANGS MAKE ME SICK-- INVENTING EXCUSES AND REASONS AS THEY GO ALONG.
BUT THEY'RE ALL DRIVEN BY THE SAME MOTIVE: CRIMINAL GREED.
POWER BAT TO TITANIUM SETTING!
THEY THINK THE LAW CAN'T TOUCH THEM... THAT THEY CAN ESCAPE JUSTICE.
WELL, IT'S TIME THEY MET THE PUNISHER.
BIKE TO AERIAL MODE!
VRZZZZZZZ

RELEASE WASP MISSILE... NOW!
HEAT-SEEKER! GOTTA SHAKE IT OFF...!
IT'S WHAT MAX WOULD DO...!
NO! CLOSING IN ON MY--
A Retrospectiv
28th
K-BOOM


I'VE LOST TOO MANY OF MY FRIENDS THANKS TO YOU, PUNISHER!
YOU'VE JUST BEEN KISSED WITH THE BLUE DAGGER!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
GONNA BRING YOU DOWN!
YEAH...IT'S MADE FROM DAMASCUS STEEL, ONE ENORMOUS PIECE, FOLDED TWO HUNDRED TIMES; IT'S MEANT TO BE THE ULTIMATE SKY BLADE...
...IT'S THE PRIZE FOR THE ILLEGAL AIR GLADIATOR CHAMPIONSHIP. SHE WON IT FIVE TIMES IN A ROW AND THEY LET HER KEEP IT.
BIKE TO AUTO-PARK!
MY STINGER'S NOT MANEUVERABLE ENOUGH... I'LL NEED THIS MARK FIVE NINJA-KATANA.

AS A SPECIAL OPERATIONS MAN, I'VE CHECKED OUT THESE DELINQUENTS' MACHINES...
...AND I CAN HANDLE A BLADE AS WELL AS ANY OF THESE CREEPS.
YAAAHHHH!
...PERHAPS NOT THIS CREEP.
GRAB SOME AIR!
THIS ISN'T THE BLUE DAGGER CHAMPIONSHIP, LADY. THIS IS REAL... THE LOSER DIES.
EVERYTHING'S FOR REAL, JERK...
AND YOU'RE GONNA DIE.


GOTTA GET THE HANG OF THIS BLADE BEFORE I START FIRING BACK... MY ARMOR WILL TAKE CARE OF HER LASERS.
YEP! I THINK I'M GETTING USED TO THIS.
WOO
I CAN SEE WHY THESE SKY GANGS GET OFF ON THIS...
IT'S DEADLY-- -- BUT EXHILARATING...
BUT ENOUGH MESSING AROUND...
...IT'S EXECUTION TIME.
WHEN SHE COMES AROUND THE SIDE OF THAT BUILDING, IT'S GOODBYE.

IT'S NOW! IT'S TOMORROW! IT'S... SYNTHI-COLA IS MMMMMM!
OOHH! HANG ON, MAXY... HERE WE GO!
DOWN THE STAIR-WELL!
I GOT TO TELL YOU, KARL. YOUR CAMPAIGN FOR OUR "BACTERIA-BURGER" WAS REALLY COOL. ALMOST MADE ME WANT TO EAT THE MUCK.
THE PUBLIC WILL GO FOR ANYTHING IF THEY SEE A NAKED BLONDE NEXT TO A SWIMMING POOL OF TEQUILA.

I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU, GOLD CARDERS!
NOW, PUNISHER! I'M GONNA CUT YOU IN TWO!
COME ON, MAX... WHERE ARE YOU?
BEHIND ME!
WOOM!
KILL POWER! DROP! DROP!

INCENDIARY ROCKET! GOODBYE, BLUE MAX!
VWOOOF!
YOU'RE SLOW, MAN! I CUT MY TEETH ON THIS KIND OF MANEUVER!
WOOM
SO DID I... I WASN'T AIMING AT HER...
...BUT BETWEEN THOSE TWO BUILDINGS, THE THERMAL UPDRAFT WILL SEND HER OUT OF CONTROL.
KCHUNNG!
AAGHH! LOST CONTROL... NOOO!

GO ON, HERO. PULL THE TRIGGER.
RID SOCIETY OF ONE MORE EVIL MENACE!
DO IT! I'VE GOT *NOTHING* TO LIVE FOR ANYWAY!
I'VE GOT NO FAMILY AND YOU JUST *KILLED* ALL MY FRIENDS.
LOOK... I'VE GOT NO FAMILY, OR FRIENDS -- *I* DIDN'T TURN TO CRIME.
OH, IS THAT RIGHT...? FROM WHERE I'M HANGING, THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHAT YOU'RE DOING!
NO -- YOU HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD.
OH, YEAH -- DON'T TELL ME, YOU'RE A *GOOD GUY* -- YOU KILL FOR *MOTIVES*. I KILL TO *STAY ALIVE!*
LOOK, ALL I KNOW IS -- I KILL YOU AND I *SAVE* A LOT OF INNOCENT LIVES.
ENOUGH TALK. TIME TO DIE, MAXINE.

NO WAY, HERO... NOBODY EVER GAVE ME ANYTHING... YOU AIN'T GONNA GIVE ME...
...DEATH!
MAX! NOOOOO!
ALCHEMAX
I DON'T KNOW WHY I CALLED OUT LIKE THAT... SHE HAD TO DIE.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I KNOW THAT...
...THERE, BUT FOR THE GRACE OF THOR, GO I.